

Between the Porte and the Lion

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Between the Porte and the Lion: identity, politics and opportunism in seventeenth century Cyprus

Introduction: modern stakes and historical mistakes

The early decades of Ottoman Cyprus were until recently clouded in obscurity. The historian's task was far from straightforward, as the relatively well-documented Venetian era gave way to what became a rather blurry period of transition from one empire to the next. There was nothing blurry about the reality on the ground of course. The obscurity stemmed from a lack of documentary evidence and the difficulty of access to the existing Ottoman archives until the 1990s, fused with the distorted view nationalist historians of both camps (Greek and Turkish) offered. This meant that when we had an image of Ottoman Cyprus as a whole, it was often an idealistic projection which drew more from dominant norms extant in Balkan nationalist writing than historical evidence. In turn, these norms often became the cast into which any documentary evidence was moulded, ultimately to create an increasingly predictable and predetermined view.

One aspect of this narrative, which I came to refer to as a form of 'narrative of suffering', is the position which was (and still is) taken by the Orthodox/Greek dominant historiography of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The example of Cyprus runs as follows: the history of the Eastern Christian/Greek Orthodox¹ populations of Cyprus-and more so of the elites-during the periods of Frankish, Venetian and Ottoman rule of the island was retrospectively blotched with the ink of Orthodox/Greek/Hellenic identity as it was discovered after the Greek War of Independence, and the historians who sought to establish the continuity of the new Greek nation and its state within the geographical space from ancient times to the present. This narrative offers the view that the Greeks, when they have not been in control of their own fate, have suffered in the oppressive hands of 'foreign' rulers who invariably sought to eradicate their culture.² Therefore, this narrative goes beyond a traditionally negative stereotype of the 'eastern' to colour *all* 'foreign' rulers with bleak colours.³ The narrative of suffering is a simplistic but powerful, monochrome depiction of a past which is, on the contrary, very complex and far from monolithic. The projected idea of a solid Greek/Orthodox identity which roughly coincided with what in the nineteenth century was considered Greek space has far-reaching consequences, which extend far beyond the iterations of secondary school teachers in Greece and Cyprus. The understanding of identities as solid, unshifting and strictly defined structures constantly in conflict with each other -a modern construct- became a photo filter through which some modern historians saw the world as it was before them, and before the 'fixer' of nationalism came to define the very boundaries of those identities.⁴ The narrative of

¹ For reasons of clarity I will use predominantly the term Greek Orthodox; however, this term must also come under scrutiny, as the documentary evidence cited here refers to either 'Greeks' or schismatics.

² An example of this narrative is the work of Timothy (Kallistos) Ware. See, Ware, Timothy, *Eustratios Argenti: a study of the Greek Church under Turkish Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964). Ware starts his monograph on the Greek Church with the words: "The long centuries of Ottoman rule were a disheartening era for the Greek nation and the Orthodox Church"; *ibid.* p. 1. Ware's work is only one example where the Ottoman period is viewed as a period of suffering during which the Greeks were in a state of quasi-slavery.

³ See Darling, Linda, "Rethinking Europe and the Islamic World in the Age of Exploration", *The Journal of Early Modern History* 2 (1998), pp. 221-246.

⁴ This model is challenged also by Zachariadou, Elizabeth A., "Co-existence and religion", *Archivum Ottomanicum*, V. 15 (1997), pp. 119-29. Marc Aymes challenges the model which sees the *millet* as the precursor of the nation; Aymes, Marc, *A Provincial History of the Ottoman Empire: Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean in the Nineteenth Century*, SOAS/Routledge Studies on the Middle East, (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 24-29.

suffering in turn strengthened the argumentation for modern-day political strife within the context of nationalist conflict in Cyprus.⁵

The impact of this 'retrograde' identity perception, and the consequent narratives, have defined the writing of Cypriot history. It is only in the last decade or so that this model was debunked in favour of more balanced approaches which offer calmer and more deeply considered representations of the island's past. Despite these recent and more holistic approaches, the nationalist one is deeply rooted and can still be encountered, often in circumstances that are deeply ironic or outright self-contradictory.⁶ This is understandable, as the nationalist rhetoric and the narrative of suffering are deeply engrained in all levels of compulsory education in places like Greece and Cyprus, and attempts at changing the curriculum towards a more inclusive and less divisive content have been met with protests in Greece in the last decade.⁷

The history of Ottoman Cyprus became retrospectively the ideological battleground in the nationalist strife which characterised the island's post-Ottoman history.⁸ In these precisely drawn trenches of historiographical warfare, the post-Ottoman Church of Cyprus came to reinvent itself (much like its Balkan and Greek equivalents) as the protector of Greek identity, language and culture—a point perfectly illustrated in the mythology of the *Krypho Scholeio*⁹ (clandestine school)—reinforced with the now classic Gyzis painting depicting the holy father schooling the children by candlelight in the mores of the *genos*.¹⁰ That painting, and Ioannis Polemis' poem of the same name which followed, became the staple of Greek nationalism and fixed its perception of the Ottoman past with the role of the church and religion at its epicentre.¹¹ This is part of a wider genre of history-

⁵ See for example Papadopoulos, Theodore, *Studies and Documents Relating to the History of the Greek Church and People under Turkish Domination* (London: Variorum, 1990, 2nd edition of 1952 original).

⁶ One such example is Paul Philippou Strongos' work on the Cypriot volunteers of the Spanish Civil War, who joined as a result of their Marxist beliefs and their involvement with the British Marxist movement as immigrants to the UK. Strongos gave his book the title *Spanish Thermopylae: Cypriot Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39*, demonstrating the deep impact of Hellenic-centred norms even in the least likely of places. This coexistence of nationalist rhetoric and beliefs with Marxist ideology could be seen (and still can) within Cypriot communist circles. Philippou Strongos, Paul, *Spanish Thermopylae: Cypriot Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39* (Perth: Tippermuir Books, 2010).

⁷ See some information here: The new history book for the final year of primary school (Year 6) was met with a huge reaction, prompting the late Archbishop of Greece Christodoulos to characterise the team of authors as 'janissaries'. Triga, Nota, "Βιβλίο Ιστορίας: ο φόβος νέου «πολέμου ταυτότητων» οδηγεί σε υποχώρηση", *Newspaper To Vima* (28 March 2007)(History book: the fear of a new identity war leads to retreat) [<http://bit.ly/1lBowBg>][Accessed 12 February 2014]. The book in question is Repousi, Maria et al, *Ιστορία Στ' Δημοτικού: στα νεώτερα και σύγχρονα χρόνια* (Athens: Organisation for the Publication of Educational Books – ΟΕΔΒ, 2001) (History for Year 6: the early modern and modern era). For a comparative study of history books in Cyprus see Papadakis, Yiannis, *History Education in Divided Cyprus: A Comparison of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Schoolbooks on the "History of Cyprus"*, (Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 2008) [<http://bit.ly/1jumiXn> accessed 15 July 2014]

⁸ Bryant, Rebecca and Yiannis Papadakis, "Introduction: modalities of time, history, and memory in ethnonational conflicts" in *Cyprus and the Politics of Memory: History, Community and Conflict*, Rebecca Bryant and Yiannis Papadakis (eds.), (London: IB Tauris, 2012), pp. 1-26. See also Bryant, Rebecca, *Imagining the Modern: The Cultures of Nationalism in Cyprus*, (London: IB Tauris, 2004).

⁹ For a discussion of the *Krypho Scholeio* mythology see Danos, Antonis, "Nikolaos Gyzis's The Secret School and an ongoing national discourse", *Nineteenth-century art worldwide*, Vol. 1, Issue 2 (Autumn 2003) online at [<http://bit.ly/1bE2Le1>] [Accessed 18 November 2013].

¹⁰ Έθνος=race, a term adopted early on to signify the Greek nation. Hroch, Miroslav and Malečková, Jitka, "Nation": A Survey of the Term in European Languages", in Leoussi, Athena S. (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Nationalism* (New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001), p. 206.

¹¹ The Church's renewed focus on its 'ethnarchic' identity coincided with a secularisation of Cypriot administration brought on by the British and therefore the need for a new political legitimisation which was justified through reference to a past role which was invented. See also: Philippou, Loizos, *Η Εκκλησία Κύπρου*

writing: that which places the new, nation-state-approved church in the heart of the nation's survival in the previous years "under domination".

The same model was used in the historiography of other Balkan nations. One need not scratch the surface too hard to find the Serbian and Bulgarian examples: Zoltán Györe iterates that

"[D]uring the centuries in which the Serbian state did not exist, the main factor that preserved Serbian ethnic consciousness was the Serbian Orthodox Church with its broad organisation and its almost continuous and deliberate activity toward preserving cohesion and the memory of Nemanjićs state. It had a legally regulated position within the Turkish Empire with substantial autonomous jurisdictions that extended to secular as well as to religious and educational issues – to a certain point. As the bearer of an idea of Serbian statehood and a tradition of king–saints, the Serbian Orthodox Church persistently maintained awareness of the national identity and the glorious past and systematically developed a sense of religious solidarity among Serbs. To be of Serbian nationality meant to be of the Orthodox religion and to regard the Serbian state tradition as identical to belonging to the Serbian Orthodox Church."¹²

The very idea of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus itself as a monolithic example of continuous existence through the centuries is problematic, much like the idea of national continuity. This model, adopted (and adapted) from its Balkan cognate nationalism, was introduced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century with the writings of historians such as Philippou and Hackett, and went unchallenged by the more recent and equally influential historians such as Papadopoulos and Hill. The island's independence in 1960 and the short-lived coexistence of the two large communities which ended with the 1974 Athens-backed coup d'état and the Turkish invasion of the island, gave the duality of the island's histories fresh impetus. The old narrative of suffering gained a fresh set of grievances which were used to accentuate those retrospective stereotypes further. However, the narrative of suffering is not unique among Christian and Balkan nation-states. The same narrative was used in the rhetoric of Arab nationalists in the same period, focussing on salient points in the Arab-speaking populations' memory to justify the need for self-determination.¹³ Reinkowski speaks of a "*histoire sainte*", where "[A]ll peaks of Arab history were credited to the Arab nation, all low points were blamed on the Persians, Turks, or Europeans."¹⁴ This is the legacy of the twentieth

επί Τουρκοκρατίας (*The Church of Cyprus under Ottoman rule*) (Nicosia: Kypriologiki Vivliothiki 3, 1975); Hackett, John, *A History of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1972 –reprint).

¹² Györe, Zoltan, "Serbian Historiography and the Modern State" in Amelang, James S. and Beer, Siegfried (eds.), *Public power in Europe: studies in historical transformations* (Pisa: Pisa University Press-Edizioni Plus, 2006), pp. 89-108, p. 93. See also Pundeff, Marin, "Bulgarian Historiography, 1942-1958", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 66, No. 3, Apr., 1961, pp. 682-693. On Turkish nationalism see an interesting study: Turkoglu, Didem, "Challenging the national history: competing discourses about a conference", Submitted to the Central European University Nationalism Studies Program in Partial Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts (Budapest: CEU, 2006). Available online on

[\[http://www.personal.ceu.hu/students/06/Nationalism_Media/TurkogluMAThesis.pdf\]](http://www.personal.ceu.hu/students/06/Nationalism_Media/TurkogluMAThesis.pdf) [Accessed 17 November 2013]. On Ukrainian post-Soviet nationalist historiography see Sukhareva, Lyudmyla, "Narratives of glory and suffering: a comparative analysis of Ukrainian and Jewish historiography", MA Thesis Submitted to the Central European University Nationalism Studies Program (Budapest: CEU, 2011).

¹³ On Arab historiography also see: Abou-El-Haj, Rifaat Ali, "The Social Uses of the Past: Recent Arab Historiography of Ottoman Rule" *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1982), pp. 185-201; Doumani, Beshara B., "Rediscovering Ottoman Palestine: Writing Palestinians into History", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (1992), pp. 5-28.

¹⁴ Reinkowski, Maurus, "Late Ottoman Rule over Palestine: Its Evaluation in Arab, Turkish and Israeli Histories, 1970-90", *Middle Eastern studies*, 35 (1999), pp. 66-97, p. 67. For a thorough examination of post-Ottoman

century, which as Rothman puts it, created a “compartmentalization” of history as “nation-states sought to resurrect “their” histories”.¹⁵

The late nineteenth century reinvention of the Orthodox Church both as an entity and as the diachronic curator of Greek identity, came to colour in vivid blue the historical representations of church, clergy, religion and state from the moment Richard Coeur-de-Lion set foot on the island to when the British left it in 1960, as this period was consequently a time when the ‘rightful owner’ of the physical and historical space was not seen to be politically dominant through the state. This meant that historians saw the island’s medieval to pre-independence history as a series of periods of tension, conflict and oppression inflicted by the various rulers on its Greek Orthodox inhabitants. The same filter was applied to Catholic and Ottoman rulers alike, with the latter being depicted in darker colours which mirror the modern conflict.

The Catholic rulers were treated with the aggregating mentality of us versus them, with the important element that ‘they’, being ‘them’, were seen as being all of the same ilk or, at best, different sides of the same coin. The fact that they may have been Frankish, Levantines, Catalans, Genoese, Venetians or whatever else, who all brought different cultural, political (and even legal) elements to add to the island’s tapestry, mattered very little, as their one, unifying characteristic was that they were most certainly different to ‘us’, something which justified their perceived stance against the Orthodox: oppressive with a view to erasing it from the island’s past and future. The story of the 13 Cypriot monks of Kantara, burned to the stake after denouncing the Catholics’ use of unleavened bread as heretical-only to be denounced themselves as heretics, serves precisely as a salient point in the characterisation of the whole of the Frankish and Venetian periods as hostile to the local Greek Christians as a matter of policy. However, an incident like that “cannot be indicative of Latin attitudes in the Frankish period, since such a thing happened only once in three centuries of Frankish rule”.¹⁶

The fact that the strife in 1950s Cyprus (and onwards) was between the Greek and Turkish nationalisms meant that the Ottoman period was viewed by Greek historians (mainly) through this lens as infinitely worse than its Catholic predecessor.¹⁷ The Ottoman period, was depicted as the darkest period in the history of the Greek ‘nation’, tantamount to slavery. The role of the Church and the clergy was re-packaged for the needs of the modern, nationalist consumer as that of a heroic symbol of resistance which constantly suffered the consequences of its ‘ethnarchic’ role. The role of the higher clergy and other Christian notables in the island’s administration during Ottoman times was therefore downplayed, if not outright ignored, in favour of the narrative of suffering. Their role was reinterpreted from that of a valuable administrative and control mechanism for the Ottoman state to that of a bulwark of ethnic resistance, standing *against* the state to protect its flock. The salient points in the cases of Cyprus and Greece are the nineteenth century executions of higher clergymen, Archbishop Kyprianos in the case of Cyprus and Patriarch Gregory V in the case of Greece. Especially for the case of Cyprus, Kyprianos’ execution in 1821 became the most important

nations see Anscombe, Frederick, *State, Faith and Nation in Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Lands*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

¹⁵ Rothman, E. Natalie, *Brokering Empire: Trans-imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), p. 8.

¹⁶ Schabel, Chris, “Religion” in Nicolaou-Konnari, Angel and Chris Schabel (eds.), *Cyprus: society and culture 1191-1374* (Brill: Leiden, 2005), pp. 157-218, pp. 195-97.

¹⁷ This view was often prompted and reinforced by non-Greek historians. See Luke, Harry, *Cyprus under the Turks, 1571-1878* (London: Hurst, 1969-reprint of 1921 original). Their depictions of the Ottoman/Turkish administration as rapacious and abusive were certainly prompted by a British-imperialist sense of “civilising” the colonies. On the Turkish side, the Ottoman period was romanticised as a period of tolerance and artistic/cultural achievement. See Gazioğlu, Ahmet C., *The Turks in Cyprus: A province of the Ottoman Empire (1571-1878)* (London: K. Rustem and Brother, 1990); Haşım Altan, Mustafa, *Belgelerle Kıbrıs Türk vakıflar tarihi (1571-1974)* (Nicosia: Kıbrıs Vakıflar İdaresi, 1986) (A history of Turkish Cypriot religious pious foundations through documentary evidence).

focal point for nationalist historical writing, as it exemplified the suffering of the island's Greeks under the Turks.¹⁸ The fact that more Muslim governors and leading military figures than Christian notables were either executed or exiled in the island's 300-year Ottoman period does not serve as a counter-example at all; these events were posed as further proof of the 'barbarism' and 'rapaciousness' of the 'other', terms liberally used throughout the twentieth century. Examples where the Christian notables were themselves involved in instances of abuse of power were either ignored or conveniently dismissed-as they do not fit the suffering narrative. This light-on-evidence but heavy-on-sentiment approach was (and still is) very resonant in both popular culture and historical writing. Salient points, such as the monks' execution in and the execution of Archbishop Kyprianos in 1821 become symbols, reminders of the suffering, and highlight the focal points of whatever agenda promotes the narrative. Similar 'salient points' are to be found in every example of nationalist historical writing, and become invaluable tools which create a discourse to directly serve modern politics. A hanging of Arab nationalists in Beirut in 1916 became the symbol-and filter-for the rewriting of Palestine's Ottoman past as tyrannical and miserable, to paraphrase Salim Tamari. Likewise, the hanging of Vasil Levski by the Ottomans in 1873 and the Bulgarian atrocities of 1876 became focal points in the Bulgarian national narrative, much like the death of Serbian Prince Lazar at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 is a focal point for Serbian nationalism-used specifically in the strife in post-Yugoslavian Kosovo in the late 1990s.¹⁹

This repositioning of the clergy and Christian elite to fit the narrative of suffering has meant that most mainstream historical research was carried out within those parameters, especially on the island and its nationalist mother ships, Greece and Turkey. Therefore, the island's rich and complex history from the medieval to the modern times was presented in monochrome simplicity which comes in handy in the times of shallow idealism and a football terrace-level of understanding of the nation's past. Any instances of acculturation and cultural amalgamation which were the norm in the patchwork of the island's cultural tapestry were quickly swept under the carpet in favour of the long view of the nation's unchanging culture, beliefs and value systems. For example, the period of 'fusion and confusion' which characterised the late medieval and even early Ottoman period, when there was significant inter-blending between what were supposedly fixed religious and cultural boundaries, was downplayed in favour of the 'Orthodox church as the suffering safe-keeper of identity' paradigm. Likewise, the post-Venetian existence on the island of Orthodox higher clergymen and notables who treaded the very fine (to invisible) boundary between the Orthodox and the Catholic doctrines, and between loyalty to the Sultan and otherwise, was either not seen or seen as sporadic incidents which did not fit the norm.

¹⁸ The execution of Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios, the Dragoman of the Divan of Cyprus, in 1809 is only vaguely cited as another such example, perhaps because of the nature of his crime, which was of a financial nature. On Kornesios see Hadjikyriacou, Antonis, "Society and Economy on an Ottoman Island: Cyprus in the Eighteenth Century", Phd Thesis (London: SOAS, 2011), pp. 261-74.

¹⁹ Tamari, Salim, "The Great War and the Erasure of Palestine's Ottoman Past" in Mansour, Camille and Fawaz, Leila (eds.), *Transformed Landscapes: Essays on Palestine and the Middle East in Honor of Walid Khalidi* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2009), pp. 105-135, p. 107. The modern Bulgarian nation was given a helping hand by Paisii Hilendarski, a Bulgarian monk in Mt Athos, who wrote the first national history of the Bulgarians in 1762. Paisii is perhaps comparable to somebody like Constantine Paparrigopoulos, who in the 1860s began the voluminous series *History of the Greek Nation*, a cornerstone of Greek national identity. See Zhelyaskova, Antonina, "Bulgaria" in Herb, Guntram H. and Kaplan, David H. (eds.), *Nations and Nationalism: A Global Historical Overview* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2008), pp. 570-82; Paparrigopoulos, Constantine, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους* (Athens: Alexandros, 2001) (15 volumes) (History of the Greek nation); Paisii Hilendarski, *Istoriya Slavyanobolgarskaya* (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1914 edition of 1762 original) (Slavonic-Bulgarian history). On the association of Prince Lazar with the modern Kosovo conflict see: Greenawalt, Alexander, "Kosovo Myths: Karadzic, Njegos, and the Transformation of Serb Memory", *Spaces of Identity*, Vol. 1 No. 3 (2001) [<http://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/soi/article/view/8045/7219>] [Accessed 10 December 2013].

The nationalist narrative has of course been criticised and rejected by now. However, the narrative which attempted to counter the nationalist formula has, in my view, gone too far in stressing the 'coexistence' of communities, whilst using the same value system to debunk it. The fact that coexistence occurred is often naively seen as proof that the different 'elements' managed to coexist in peace despite the fact that they were different, and by nature inclined to hatred and conflict. This well-meaning model is also of limited use, as it sees coexistence as the result of a conscious effort made against the odds and realities, thereby implicitly using the same "oppositional framework" as its counter-narrative.²⁰ Symbiosis and religious syncretism have therefore become a mirror of that oppositional framework, in that their use may suggest that historical conditions were either instances of deviation or conformity from well-defined norms.²¹ In the case of Cyprus, the rather nostalgic and romantic historiography of the left has sought to depict the Ottoman period in the same way it has depicted the pre-1950s period of coexistence and shared struggles amongst the Turkish and Greek Cypriots, especially during times of labour strife and union action.²²

It is not the purpose of this article to propose a new set of analytical tools; that would go beyond the scope-and word limit. However, by looking at the history of early modern Cyprus, and the Mediterranean more widely, it becomes obvious that the current binary choice does not suffice in attempting to understand the complex nature of relationships, identities, and the people who often found themselves shifting between confessional and political loyalties. This paper will deal with these people, the Cypriot elite of early Ottoman Cyprus and its varying degrees of acclimatisation and adaptation within the new realities that came with the conquest of 1571. I will demonstrate that the norm in Ottoman Cyprus, much like the norm in that other Cyprus before it, was not based on religious and ethnic perceptions, neither did it operate despite them. The norm, if we can stick to the one norm at all, was that the religious and ethnic dimensions were often driven or determined by social, political and economic factors-which transcended the ethno-religious realities.

Venetian, Ottoman, Latin, Greek: chameleon notables and fluidity in early Ottoman Cyprus

The end of Venetian domination of Cyprus in 1571 brought with it a period of transition to a new era. Much has been said of conquest and change being not necessarily synonymous, and Cyprus' case is probably no different. The one thing which has however had a catalytic role on this period was the fact that the Ottomans, at war with Venice until 1573, officially banished Catholicism from the island, at least until the peace treaty was signed. That, along with the passing to a system where the local patrician families' hitherto undisputed right to political and social prominence was no longer guaranteed, meant that those families had to flee the island or reinvent themselves in order to achieve political survival.

It would be naïve to believe that significant numbers from the old elite did not become co-opted into the new administration. After all, the need for experienced and capable locals to help run the island was a pragmatic driver which offered opportunities for old masters to become new ones. Their knowledge of networks, geography and, crucially, the fiscal realities of the island, would have been invaluable to the Ottomans. There is some evidence of conversion to Islam, which is perhaps

²⁰ Dursteler, Eric, *Venetians in Constantinople* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), p. 6.

²¹ Tijana Krstic offers a useful critique of this model. Krstic, Tijana, "The amphibious politics of 'ambiguous sanctuaries': F. Hasluck and historiography of syncretism and conversion to Islam in 15th - and 16th - century Ottoman Rumeli" in Shankland, David (ed.), *Archaeology, anthropology and heritage in the Balkans and Anatolia: the life and times of F.W. Hasluck, 1878-1920* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2013), pp. 247-262.

²² There are numerous publications on the history of the communist workers' union (PEO) and its mixed membership up until the late 1940s. See for example the expansive work of Pantelis Varnava, published by the communist party of Cyprus (AKEL) and its trade union (PEO); See for example Varnava, Pantelis, *Κοινοί Απεργιακοί Αγώνες Ελληνοκυπρίων Και Τουρκοκυπρίων* (Nicosia, 1997) (Joint strikes and labour struggles of the Greek and Turkish Cypriots).

sketchy, but exists none the less. One of those questions which are perhaps impossible to answer is whether the first Ottoman detailed cadastral survey, undertaken just after the 1571 conquest, was drafted with the help of locals with the know-how of the land and its productivity. This is suggested by the eighteenth-century historian of Cyprus, Kyprianos, who names certain noblemen such as Livio Podocataro, Scipio Caraffa, Pier Paolo Synclitico, Giovanni Muscornio, Orsatto Lusignan, Flatro Flatro and the De Nores brothers, Giannetto and Ettore among others who had surrendered and were ransomed, some of whom were rumoured to have become members of the *sipahi*.²³

The limited opportunities for these old patricians on the island were mainly available as part of the new administration, and often after conversion to Islam. Another option open to them would be to become dragomans, or higher clergymen in the newly-established Greek Orthodox Church on the island. The direct outcome of this is that the period from the conquest until the late seventeenth century is characterised by the steady contacts between those higher clergymen and other notables with Catholic states and the Vatican itself, often affirming their faith to the Catholic Church and appealing for support and even intervention by these Latin powers with a view to a *reconquista* of Cyprus. Archbishop Timotheos (1572-87) was one of many higher clergymen who had a fluctuating and frequently re-negotiated identity outlook. In October 1587 he was a co-signatory to a letter to Philip II of Spain, pleading for Spanish intervention for the 'liberation of the island'. In his letter, Timotheos claims that a group of notables, bishops, clergymen and monks of the island, under oath, subscribe to his plea for intervention.²⁴ The letter claimed that there were 65,000 Christians on the island ready to take up arms at the sight of the Spanish Armada, in order to counter the Ottoman garrisons of 6,000 men in total to achieve liberation.²⁵ The Spanish Council of State convened in May 1588 and considered the letter, concluding that a campaign to Cyprus would be at the time impossible, but to inform the clergyman/messenger²⁶ that a future campaign may be possible, offering words of encouragement.²⁷ This information was to be conveyed orally, as a written promise or commitment to future action would jeopardise the lives of those on the island should it fall in the wrong hands. It also agreed to support the messenger with the costs of his journey.²⁸

This attempt was in no way an isolated incident. It formed part of a post-Ottoman conquest reality, whereby the new Greek Orthodox higher clergy had a positively pro-Catholic stance, and often engaged in appeals to various Catholic states. We also have the phenomenon of Cypriot notables who scattered across the kingdoms and states of Catholic Europe, looking for support, accommodation and a new political and social future. Inevitably, some of these people were drawn by the rampant and overt manner in which the Habsburgs and the Spanish kingdom in particular projected an image of defenders of the faith in the face of danger from the East. The Spanish court had the financial and military might-as well as the relative lack of diplomatic necessity for peace and reconciliation by comparison to the Venetians-hence it received the attention of many post-conquest Cypriot nobles who were left without a home, both in physical and political terms. The

²³ Archimandritis Kyprianos, *Ιστορία χρονολογική της νήσου Κύπρου* (Nicosia: Evagoras, 1902-reprint of 1788 original) (A Chronological History of the Island of Cyprus), pp. 446-47. Jennings, Ronald C., 'The Population, Taxation and Wealth in the Cities and Villages of Cyprus', *Raiyyet Rüşümü, Essays Presented to Halil İnalcık, Journal of Turkish Studies*, 10 (1986), pp. 175-89.

²⁴ Chasiotis, Ioannis, *Ισπανικά έγγραφα της Κυπριακής ιστορίας, 16ος-17ος αι.* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1972) (Spanish Documents of Cypriot History), pp. 21-24.

²⁵ "Los christianos que en esta ysla se hallan al presente son sesenta y cinco mil hombres de edad para las armas, los quales prometten a V[uestra] M[agesta]d que, qual hora y tiempo por mandado de V[uestra] M[agesta]d llegare aquí Su armada, pelearán valientemente todos hasta que recuperen la libertad", Chasiotis, *Ισπανικά έγγραφα*, p. 22.

²⁶ This was Gabriel Nomicó (Γαβριήλ Νομικός), a clergyman.

²⁷ "responder con buenas palavras y animandole". Chasiotis, *Ισπανικά έγγραφα*, p. 25.

²⁸ This attempt came at a time when the governor of Cyprus was a Calabrian renegade, Cafer Paşa, who may or may not have had connections with his alma mater and the Viceroy of Naples as a result. On his activity in the cotton trade with Venice, and his endurance as governor of Cyprus see Dursteler, *Venetians*, pp. 164-65.

documents from the Spanish archives bear witness to a number of cases where such individuals petitioned the Spanish court for recognition, employment or financial support. In April 1573, Andrea Zacharia, “gentilhombre de Cipro”, petitioned the Spanish court via the Viceroy of Naples for money to ransom his family—one brother and five sisters—who had been captured during the Ottoman conquest. He was awarded 300 ducats for this purpose.²⁹ Another, more prominent case, was that of Livio Podocataro, who was attempting to raise funds to ransom his three sons, after he himself was ransomed out of captivity.³⁰ In 1575 Pedro Muscorno, another “cavallero cipriota” also received some financial support from the Spanish to help with his loss of status after the conquest.³¹ Cases such as these persisted well into the seventeenth century. In 1606 a Cypriot named Nicolás de Gregorio³² having fled from Famagusta to Naples as a result of his reported activity in helping other Christians escape the Ottomans, was supported in his attempt to raise funds to help his family join him.³³ A case which has received greater attention was that of Giacomo de Nores (b. Nicosia 1568). De Nores was a scion of the De Nores and Podocataro patrician families of Cyprus. He was taken captive during the conquest of Nicosia, and spent his childhood as the child-slave of an Ottoman bombardier. He travelled as far as the Ottoman-Safavid frontiers and became fluent in Ottoman and perhaps Persian. After he was ransomed by his mother in 1587—having spent his youth in captivity—he petitioned Venice for employment, citing both his lineage and his knowledge of Ottoman language and customs.³⁴ This is only part of a wider phenomenon, where Cypriot patricians and people who claimed “illustrious relatives” or previous service in Venetian Cyprus or in other Venetian possessions lost to the Ottomans, flocked to Venice requesting support and employment.³⁵

During this period, reports on the feasibility of an attempted *reconquista* were circulating. In 1578 Giovanni Santa Maura, “nobile ciprioto”, writing from Naples in 1578, compiled a report (in Italian) on the finances and production of Cyprus, but most crucially on the Janissary revolt which resulted in the death of governor Arap Ahmet, describing it as a potential opportunity for intervention by Spain. It also mentioned the figures between 52,000 and 62,000 men who could take up arms against the local garrison with support from Spain. These reports were met with suspicion and lack of credulity by the Spanish, who considered them to be exaggerated and decided against any action.³⁶

The ‘intelligence’ which reported that thousands of Cypriots were ready to take up arms was reiterated with great frequency, and was received with incredulity and suspicion. In 1606, a certain Don Pedro Avendaño, “griego de naçion”, sent a report to the court of King Philip III of Spain, claiming that he had led a rebellion in Cyprus in which 12,000 “Christian Greeks” had taken part and caused casualties of more than 3,500 Turks. However, not having arms to sustain their struggle, they had to retreat to the mountains and were waiting for intervention by a “Christian prince”.³⁷ Once again the Spanish Council of State agreed to avoid committing to any action, while at the same time offering encouragement and vague promises to Avendaño. However, in the subsequent failed raid on Famagusta by a joint Tuscan and Spanish corsair force in the summer of 1607, there was a concrete expectation on the part of the leaders, and especially Don Pedro Téllez-Girón y Velasco, the

²⁹ Chasiotis, *Ισπανικά έγγραφα*, pp. 2-3.

³⁰ Chasiotis, *Ισπανικά έγγραφα*, pp. 3-4; Kyprianos, *Ιστορία*, p. 446.

³¹ Chasiotis, *Ισπανικά έγγραφα*, pp. 4-5. As mentioned earlier, both Livio Podocataro and the Muscorno family are mentioned in the post-conquest establishment of Ottoman rule.

³² This and other names are given in their Spanish form, since they come from Spanish documentation.

Chasiotis, using modern Greek conventions, gives this name as Νικόλαος Γρηγορίου.

³³ Chasiotis, *Ισπανικά έγγραφα*, pp. 69-70.

³⁴ Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, pp. 174-75. De Nores is described by Rothman as an example of “trans-imperial subjecthood”.

³⁵ Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, pp. 53-54.

³⁶ Chasiotis, *Ισπανικά έγγραφα*, pp. 14-16.

³⁷ Chasiotis, *Ισπανικά έγγραφα*, pp. 61-63.

future Duke of Ossuna and Viceroy of Naples and Sicily, who persisted in a futile attempt to find the local Greeks who were to take up arms.³⁸

In 1608, the Dragoman of Cyprus Piero Goneme wrote to the court of the Duchy of Savoy, urging the Duke to assist in the liberation of the island.³⁹ In 1609, an appeal written and signed in Greek by Archbishop Christodoulos, his bishops and other higher clergymen, refers to the “great tyranny suffered” as a result of both a previous rebellion (that of Avendaño presumably) and the failed Tuscan-Spanish attack on Famagusta. In this letter, it is stressed that the conditions were ripe for a Spanish intervention, which would be joined by 30,000 Greeks of Cyprus against 8,000 Turks.⁴⁰ Yet another plea, accompanied by a report on the feasibility of a campaign to capture Cyprus, was sent to Philip III in 1610 with Luys Escútari⁴¹, representing the higher clergy of Cyprus led by Archbishop Christodoulos, and other notables-such as the Dragoman of Cyprus Piero Goneme. In this report details are given as to the garrisons of Cyprus, their arms and fortifications and its number which is reported as 8,000 men. It also estimates the number of Christians who could take up arms at “up to 35,000”.⁴² Once again this was taken with more than a pinch of salt, as the Council of State found it to be “sin fundam(en)to” and advised Count de Lemos to close the matter without offering Scutari great hope.⁴³

Further appeals to the King of Spain followed in 1611⁴⁴ and 1613⁴⁵ and were discussed until at least 1623, without any indication that the Spanish took them seriously or that they were considering an intervention. At the same time, the Cypriot higher clergy, and Archbishop Christodoulos in particular, were also pleading with the Duchy of Savoy, citing their historical relationship with the Crown of Cyprus as added incentive for an intervention. Appeals to Savoy were sent in 1609, 1611, 1617 and 1632, in all of which Christodoulos had a part.⁴⁶ Another one was sent in 1668 by Archbishop Nikiphoros. According to Hill, this was to be the last recorded appeal by the Cypriot clergy to Catholic powers for intervention, and it signified a shift in the position of the higher clergy within Ottoman administration.⁴⁷

The above appeals, whether sincere expressions of hope and despair by the remnants of a Venetian past, or power games intended to reinforce the hold on power and wealth of local players, can perhaps be seen as evidence of a certain fluidity in terms of identities on the island. This would go against the monolithic narrative of nationalist historiography, but would also not paint a whole picture. What we have in post-Venetian Cyprus cannot simply be defined as identity fluidity. Rather, it is a situation where identity and identities were flexible, negotiable concepts; at times fluid and at times rigid, depending on the situation. The fact that the-at least in name-island’s Greek Orthodox archbishops could accommodate both Greek Orthodox (schismatic in the eyes of their Catholic

³⁸ On this raid see Hadjianastasis, Marios, “Corsair tactics and lofty ideals: the 1607 Tuscan raid on Cyprus” in Walsh, Michael (ed), *Famagusta: City of Empires 1571-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, forthcoming).

³⁹ Hill, George, *A History of Cyprus. Vol. IV: the Ottoman province, the British colony 1571-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), pp. 53-54.

⁴⁰ Chasiotis, *Ισπανικά έγγραφα*, p. 55.

⁴¹ Λοΐζος Σκούταρης.

⁴² “Hay por cuenta y al estimi(ent)o hecho hasta 35 mil combatientes chr(isti)anos”. Chasiotis, *Ισπανικά έγγραφα*, p. 76.

⁴³ Chasiotis, *Ισπανικά έγγραφα*, pp. 79-80.

⁴⁴ Chasiotis, *Ισπανικά έγγραφα*, p. 81.

⁴⁵ Chasiotis, *Ισπανικά έγγραφα*, pp. 89-94.

⁴⁶ Hill, *History*, p. 54.

⁴⁷ Hill, *History*, p. 59. This is reinforced in Hadjianastasis, Marios, “Bishops, Ağas and Dragomans: A Social and Economic History of Ottoman Cyprus, 1640-1704”, Unpublished PhD dissertation (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2004), pp. 216-17. See also Hadjianastasis, Marios, “Consolidation of the Cypro-Ottoman Elite, 1650–1750” in Kappler, Matthias et al (eds.), *Ottoman Cyprus – New Perspectives* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag), pp. 63-88.

opposites) and pro-Catholic (overtly or covertly) tendencies without a hint of contradiction demonstrates that the identity choice was far from binary and monochrome, but rather a complex issue which cannot be examined in isolation without taking into consideration the socio-economic conditions which required subtlety.

Counter-reformation and its transposition to Cyprus

The period of confessionalisation, as it came to be known, brought with it an impetus on the part of the Catholic Church which created new realities in a confessionally contested space such as Cyprus.⁴⁸ The creation of Propaganda Fide in 1622 and its missionary activity in Europe and the Ottoman Empire came to both reinforce and at the same time challenge the realities on Cyprus.⁴⁹ It is at this juncture that the Cypriot notables' appeals for support and intervention found a new target. The Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in Rome started receiving reports and appeals from those in Cyprus who had Catholic sympathies and an interest in the strengthening of the Catholic presence on the island. In 1625 the Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus sent a report to Rome with information on the island's population and the condition in which the island's Catholics found themselves after the Ottoman conquest. The archbishop decried the lack of spiritual and material support, especially for the Maronites, who find themselves in hardship and had their churches taken by the Greeks. The Congregation instructed the dispatch of two missionaries in response to the report.⁵⁰ These were followed with the dispatch of two Jesuit missionaries.⁵¹

The beginning of Vatican's involvement in Cyprus, followed by the French Capuchin missions later in the seventeenth century created a new dynamic which was to prolong the feelings of split loyalties amongst the local elites. The perseverance of appeals and declarations of faith almost 100 years after the island passed to the Ottomans cannot be simply the manifestation of transitional identities and nostalgia for the past. Appealing to Catholic Europe had become almost a norm to be adhered to, and was perhaps an indication of much more than just anxiety and eagerness to return to the Catholic fold.

The Propaganda Fide archives are very revealing as to the extent and nature of the relationships between Rome and Cyprus. In 1625, the local Catholics, including French and Venetian merchants, requested the appointment of a bishop to oversee the Catholic faith on the island. Initially the idea was dismissed, as, in the words of the Jesuit Domenico Mauritio "this is no place for a Latin bishop" on account of the lack of a sufficient Catholic congregation to support the appointment.⁵² This decision was met with the protests of the Catholics of Cyprus. The position of Rome shifted after a letter by a certain Francesco Locatello⁵³ in 1629, in which he made spectacular claims as to the feasibility and potential of the Catholic cause on the island. He claimed that he himself had great influence over the Paşa of the island, since one of his sons had married the Paşa's daughter-who subsequently converted to Catholicism with the Paşa's consent. Locatello also claims that two of his sons lived as Greeks, and that Archbishop Christodoulos was his nephew, while his

⁴⁸ In what Hill describes as a "curious anecdote", Cyprus in 1630 became the subject of a proposal to the Duke of Rohan to acquire it as an asylum for persecuted Protestants from France and Germany. Hill, *History*, pp. 55-56.

⁴⁹ On Propaganda Fide in the Ottoman Empire see Soykut, Mustapha, "The Ottoman Empire and Europe in Political History through Venetian and Papal Sources" in Birchwood, Matthew and Dimmock, Matthew (eds.), *Cultural Encounters Between East and West* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005), pp. 168-94.

⁵⁰ Tsirpanlis, Zacharias, *Ανέκδοτα Έγγραφα εκ των Αρχείων του Βατικανού, 1625-1667* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1973), pp. 1-3 (Unpublished documents from the Vatican archives 1625-1667). Tsirpanlis' collection of documents from the De Propaganda Fide archives is of paramount importance.

⁵¹ Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, pp. 9-10.

⁵² Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, p. 17; "qui non è luogo per un vescovo latino, nè vi è entrata alcuna, perche ogni casa si dissipò".

⁵³ Also encountered as Lucatello or Lucadello.

other two sons lived as Latins (including the Paşa's son-in-law).⁵⁴ Locatello also wrote to a clergyman nephew of his, Pietro Vespa of Venice, and encouraged him to put himself forward for the bishop's position, advising him that the merchants were rich and would easily sustain his position.⁵⁵

It is impossible to assess whether Locatello's claims were true or simply exaggerated in order to cause the appointment of a Catholic bishop in Cyprus. Particularly the claim that the Paşa's daughter had been allowed to convert to Catholicism seems rather implausible and should not be taken at face value. Regardless of the plausibility, however, his intervention brought the result he wanted: Pietro Vespa was appointed Bishop of Paphos and was instructed to move to Cyprus, especially since Locatello was believed to have had a great deal of influence on the Paşa, something which would facilitate the establishment of Vespa on the island.⁵⁶

His appointment and subsequent arrival in the latter half of 1629⁵⁷ was met with a mixture of reactions. Vespa was well received by the merchant community based in Larnaca, and soon set out on a tour of the island in order to establish the state of the Catholic faith in all regions, urban and rural. Outside Nicosia and Larnaca he found that any remnants of Catholicism were out of necessity (according to Vespa) engaged in a relationship with the Greek rite. Apart from the Maronite community, which was well served by its own clergy and archbishop, Catholics in the countryside just went to Greek mass or had to travel to the cities for confession or communion.⁵⁸ This 'necessity' is a dangerous assumption which suggests that the absence of Catholic clergy was solely responsible for the communication and exchange between Catholic and Greek Christians. However, this would do injustice to the possibility that this coexistence was not an abnormal departure from what Vespa considered the norm, but a valid and original characteristic of a vibrant and dynamic society in transition.

In his first report, Vespa found that the numbers of 'overt' Catholics were very low, but he claimed that many Greeks he spoke to received him with great courtesy and indicated their "desire to be united with our Holy Roman Church and willingness to recognise our High Pontiff as true vicar of Christ and legitimate successor of Saint Peter".⁵⁹ Vespa went on to repeat that oft-repeated estimation that the island could easily be taken from the Turks, given this support.

In Nicosia, Vespa had meetings with both Archbishop Christodoulos and the Paşa and reported that he was well received by both. According to his report, Archbishop Christodoulos confirmed his pro-Catholic sentiments by stating that he considered the Pope the supreme leader of Christianity, superior to the Greek Patriarch. This was accompanied by a letter, bearing Christodoulos' sigil, which expressed his and his bishops' reverence towards the Pope and his recognition as the "universal pastor of the flock of Christ".⁶⁰ This corroborates the evidence from the Spanish archives in identifying Archbishop Christodoulos and three bishops as pro-Catholic, at least

⁵⁴ "Due de miei figlioli si hanno dato a vivere alla greca, et l'arcivescovo Greco è mio nipote; li altri doi vivono alla latina et uno ha presso per moglie la figlia del Bassa, et uno schiavo l'ha battezzata secretamente; et il Bassa è tanto huomo da bene, che se fosse proceduto, subito di quanto desideriamo, certo che si potrebbe batezare ancora lui secretamente". Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, p. 23.

⁵⁵ Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, pp. 22-23.

⁵⁶ "potentissimo col Bassà e col detto arcivescovo Greco"; Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, p. 25.

⁵⁷ It is worth noting that the whole process took almost 5 years.

⁵⁸ This was the case with some Catholic families in Limassol, who stated that they travelled to Larnaca for confession or communion, offered by the Franciscan monks there. These were presumably those appointed in 1625; Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, p. 36.

⁵⁹ "li Greci, quali generalmente mostrano ardente desiderio di star uniti con la nostra Santa Chiesa Romana e di voler conoscere il Sommo Pontefice per vero vicario di Christo, e legitimo successo di San Pietro"; Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, p. 49.

⁶⁰ "Pastore Universale del Pascolo et Ovile di Christo", Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, p. 57. Such declarations and instances of crypto-catholicism were common: Greene, Molly, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton and Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 105.

when it came to their interactions with Catholic Europe. Benedetto da Bassano, a Franciscan missionary writing from Rome in 1638, reiterated that Christodoulos and three of his bishops could possibly convert to Catholicism, while the Bishop of Limassol represented the most difficult case, signifying perhaps underlying currents and conflicts within the Greek Orthodox higher clergy.⁶¹ Ultimately, da Bassano considered the Archbishop's pro-Catholic sentiments-as expressed in his letter-as the gateway to potentially reaching and taking hold of "all the souls of the Kingdom".⁶²

Going back to Vespa, despite his initial positive reception, he soon found that his arrival and presence had threatened the status quo within the existing Catholic presence on the island. The Maronites protested the fact that Vespa was appointed to administer and oversee all Catholic presence and churches on the island, including theirs, only for their protest to be ignored by Pope Urban VIII who confirmed the appointment in October 1629.⁶³ It is clear that beyond the theological guidance and support, the Maronite community and especially its leadership, did not want to be 'managed' by an 'outsider', but were perhaps hoping that their role could be elevated. Or it could even be a simple reaction to having to support financially the new post.

Vespa also encountered great hostility and resistance by the Franciscan monks in Larnaca, who refused to believe the authenticity of his documents and his appointment, and questioned his authority. When Vespa set out on his island tour, the Franciscans wrote to the Paşa accusing Vespa of being a spy of the Catholic Church, having arrived with huge sums of money. The result of this was that a few days after Vespa's meeting with the Paşa, he was again summoned and interrogated on the basis of the Franciscans' accusations. Vespa denied everything, but was told in no uncertain terms that his presence on the island was subject to a tribute amounting to half of what the Greek Archbishop had to pay: 1,500 *kuruş*.⁶⁴ With this development Vespa found that the support from the Catholic resident and merchant community disappeared, as "la natione" did not want to pay the tribute demanded by the Paşa- once more economic considerations had taken precedence over religious affiliation. Vespa concluded his visit by leaving the island in secret, in case he was detained on account of his not having paid the tribute. He went to Crete, where he found orders instructing him to go to Aleppo and Palestine.⁶⁵ He soon returned to the island to assume his post, and stayed there until his death in 1655, whereupon he was replaced by Giovanni Batista da Todi, a member of the Franciscan mission in Cyprus. Vespa's time was characterised by a power struggle between himself, the Maronites and the Franciscans, and his initial dispute with the latter lasted at least a decade, if not until his death. The difficulties he encountered come as a surprise if one considers the tone of Locatello's letter and the promises of support from all and sundry. The crude reality on the ground was that the new appointment came as a challenge to the existing status quo, encountering resistance from those whose powers would be limited as a result. It would also appear that the Paşa's expected pro-Catholic stance did not really materialise beyond a lukewarm acceptance of the new archbishop-provided that the tribute he expected was paid. On the whole, Vespa's coming, as an outsider, to a space with defined or contested power relationships and networks may have been the cause of his initial struggles. However, the fact that he persevered until his death in 1655 is proof that he must at least have come to some kind of compromise or resolution with other parties.

Another member of the post-Venetian Cypriot elite was Pietro Flatro, a doctor who was a scion of a "principal casa di questo Regno" who was educated in Padua and returned to Cyprus, where he lived as a Greek Orthodox until he was converted by da Todi. It appears that he still led a double life, out of fear of persecution for his Catholic faith.⁶⁶ Flatro was the personal physician of

⁶¹ Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, pp. 61-65.

⁶² "la qual lettera stimo et tengo per certo sii la porta per entrar al possesso di tutte l'anime di quell Regno"; Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, p. 62.

⁶³ Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, pp. 29-34.

⁶⁴ Vespa uses "piastre".

⁶⁵ Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, p. 54.

⁶⁶ Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, p. 81.

Archbishop Christodoulos, and wrote a series of letters on the subject of faith to da Todi. He affirmed his and the Archbishop's Catholic faith, and pointed out the difficulties in overtly expressing it due to the fears mentioned earlier. Flatro remained by Christodoulos' side even after Parthenios ousted him from the Archiepiscopal throne for a year in 1639-40, after which Christodoulos, now an old man, returned and remained in post until his death. His successor, Nikiphoros, also had Flatro by his side, and like his predecessor Christodoulos he affirmed his faith in the Catholic Church in a letter sent by Flatro to the Franciscan mission in 1650.⁶⁷ Nikiphoros had simply carried on Christodoulos' accommodation and overt courting of the Catholic missions. In 1650 Nikophoros and the Bishop of Paphos Gabriel had once more declared their faith and recognition of the Pope, prompting the Franciscan missionary Benedetto di Lauro to request the Vatican for expressions of support towards them.⁶⁸ Di Lauro also mentions in a letter of his that Nikiphoros invited him to attend synod meetings, something which raises many interesting questions as to the theology practised by the Greek Orthodox higher clergy at the time.⁶⁹

Of the Greek Orthodox higher clergy in the period up to 1670 it must be said that positions were firmly in the grip of a post-Venetian pro-Catholic Cypriot elite. This became quickly evident, when the first archbishop to be appointed immediately after the Ottoman conquest, who was reportedly a Syrian clergyman who "bought" the post from the Grand Vizier, was quickly "ousted" in favour of a local patrician called Timotheos of Acre.⁷⁰ Timotheos, who as we saw earlier was very active in his contacts and appeals for liberation of Cyprus, is clearly defined by Kyprianos as a "monk from the noble Cypriot house of Acre".⁷¹ The d'Acre patrician family of Cyprus was well known in the Frankish and Venetian periods, and it is very possible that Timotheos was a descendant of the Lusignan family. This demonstrates the considerable control former patricians had on the 'new' post of Greek Orthodox archbishop and the bishoprics.⁷² This explains why, although nominally under the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul, the Greek Orthodox archbishops of Cyprus maintained such a pro-Catholic stance. Indeed, the turn towards Istanbul, both doctrinal and political, was not the direct result of the Patriarchate's activity, but the result of wider processes within the Ottoman state and the Mediterranean, as we will see below.

The arrival of the Franciscan, Jesuit and Capuchin missions in Cyprus, and the dispatch of Vespa as Propaganda Fide's bishop, brought to the island the makings of a power struggle which straddled state and faith boundaries in confessionalisation-period Europe. The missions in Cyprus had to compete with the bishop and each other for the alms and fees the merchants paid towards their sustenance, and had to jostle with each other to claim as great a soul (and coin) share as possible. Vespa's difficulties with the missionaries, was perhaps a replication in miniature of a similar situation which existed in Istanbul, one which mirrored the complex world of intra-faith and inter-state rivalries.⁷³ The confessionalisation dynamic and its drive of missionaries to Cyprus was initially

⁶⁷ Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, p. 133.

⁶⁸ Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, pp. 127-29. Letters from Propaganda Fide were sent to Nikiphoros, Flatro and the Bishop of Paphos, Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, p. 145.

⁶⁹ Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, pp. 141-42.

⁷⁰ Kyprianos, *Ιστορία*, p. 456.

⁷¹ "Κύπριος μοναχός από το σπήτι του Άκρε ευγενούς Άρχοντος Κυπρίου". Kyprianos, *Ιστορία*, p. 456.

⁷² There had not been a Greek Orthodox archbishop since the thirteenth century. Hadjianastasis, "Bishops", p. 102.

⁷³ Baghdiantz McCabe, Ina, *Orientalism in Early Modern France: Eurasian Trade, Exoticism and the Ancien Regime* (Berg: Oxford and New York, 2008), pp. 98-99; Greene, *Pirates*, pp. 101-107. See also Frazee, Charles, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453-1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). On the case of Zante see Spanou, Maria and Birtachas, Stathis, *Θρησκευτικές ζυμώσεις στη Βενετοκρατούμενη Ζάκυνθο και ο «κόσμος» ενός Καθολικού ιεροκήρυκα το 1640*, *Eoa kai Esperia*, 4 (1999 - 2000), pp. 46-66 (Religious fermentations in Venetian Zante and the world of a Catholic missionary in 1640). [<http://www.eoaesperia.org/index.php/esperia/article/viewFile/50/52.pdf>] [Accessed 28 January 2014].

facilitated by, and ultimately intertwined with the irredentist feelings (both covert and overt) of the post-Venetian Catholic elite which was seen to aspire to the island's 'liberation' from the Ottomans. Missionary activities had mainly two purposes. The first was to protect and safeguard the existing Catholic community on the island, including the merchants who either visited or lived there. The second purpose tied in with the overall aims of the confessionalisation movement, aiming to acquire new souls for the faith, using some good, old-fashioned catechism. To that extent, the Franciscan da Todi requested in 1650 that theological books in Latin and Greek be sent to Cyprus for the mission's purposes.⁷⁴ A consignment of books arrived in 1662, with a very distinct topic being the Council of Florence, as it was certainly intended to be the main crux of discussions and arguments aiming at co-opting Greek Christians into the Catholic faith.⁷⁵ Molly Greene suggests that missions in the Ottoman Empire such as the ones in Cyprus largely failed to establish new Catholic communities.⁷⁶ In the case of Cyprus we certainly do not have evidence to contradict that statement. Rather, we have a definite end to the pro-Catholic tendencies of the Greek higher clergy with the end of the era of Archbishop Ilarion Kigalas in 1674-78.

Ilarion Kigalas and the turn towards Istanbul

Ilarion Kigalas was born in Cyprus in 1624 and was baptised in Ayia Napa after the Greek Orthodox rite.⁷⁷ Ilarion and his brother Ioannis were educated at the Greek College of St. Athanasios in Rome, whose purpose was to educate Greek/Eastern clergymen in an effort to educate Greek flocks in the East and "facilitate the reunion of the schismatical churches".⁷⁸ He became rector of the Greek College in Padua, but left under a dispute to establish schools in Cephalonia and Istanbul in 1660. In 1674 Ilarion was appointed Archbishop of Cyprus, an appointment which caused a negative reaction amongst the local clergy, especially because of his close ties with the Capuchins and his appointment of Kosmas Mavroudis as Bishop of Limassol. Mavroudis was an ambitious clergyman, who was previously a vicar to the Patriarch of Alexandria but had professed his support and devotion to the Catholic faith.⁷⁹ Ilarion Kigalas and his brother Ioannis were active exponents of the Catholic cause and had strong links with the Propaganda Fide.

Ilarion's presence in Cyprus before his appointment was marked by a decree by the local Greek synod condemning Calvinism in 1668, which was presided over by his predecessor Nikiphoros and instigated by Kigalas himself.⁸⁰ This decree, and Kigalas' subsequent appointment in 1670 points to a more daring and direct approach by the Catholic Church to influence matters on the island at the highest level. However, it seems that the gamble not only failed, but also signified the beginning of the end of this period of direct influence over and communication with Greek hierarchs of Cyprus. Kigalas' authority was disputed directly, and he had to appeal to the *sharia* court of Nicosia in ca. 1676 because three other clergymen told him directly that they did not want him as archbishop.⁸¹

⁷⁴ Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, p. 131.

⁷⁵ Tsirpanlis, *Βατικανό*, pp. 176-77.

⁷⁶ Greene, *Pirates*, p. 103.

⁷⁷ Hadjipsaltis, Costas, "Εγγράφα σχετικά προς τίνες επί Τουρκοκρατίας Κύπριους Λογίους και τον Αρχιεπίσκοπον Ιλαρίωνα Κιγάλαν", *Kypriakai Spoudai*, 24 (1960), pp. 51-61, pp. 55-57.

⁷⁸ See Benigni, Umberto. "Roman Colleges" In *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912). [<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13131a.htm>] [Accessed 28 January 2014]. On Ioannis Kigalas see Tsirpanlis, *Εγγράφα*, p. 145.

⁷⁹ Tsirpanlis, *Εγγράφα*, pp. 187-88. For more on Mavroudis see Hadjikyriacou, Antonis, Hadjikyriacou, Antonis, "The Ottomanization of Cyprus: Turbulent Times of Transition and the Quest for New Analytical Tools" in Umit, Devrim(ed.), *Ottoman World: Foundational Coexistences* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, forthcoming 2014), p. 9.

⁸⁰ Philippou, *Εκκλησία*, pp. 63-73; Hackett, *Church*, pp. 212-13.

⁸¹ "Seni piskoposlukta istemeziz"; Kuzey Kıbrıs Milli Arşiv, *Lefkoşa Sicil Defteri*, n. 5, p. 10, entry 3.

Kigalas was reaffirmed as the rightful Archbishop, using his *berat* to good effect, but his tenure did not last very long. He resigned probably in 1678, and died in Istanbul.⁸²

Kigalas' activity and the anti-Calvinist synod of 1668 sit well within the context of the reformation and counter-reformation movements, and their impact on the Eastern Church. Reformist and conservative Greek Orthodox leaders often had to take a position which was either pro-reformation or more closely aligned to that of the Catholic Church, as the religious dispute carried over into the Ottoman lands.⁸³

It is widely believed that the end of Kigalas' tenure marked a shift in the Greek Christian hierarchy of Cyprus towards a more involved role in Ottoman administration. This view is supported by both Kyprianos and Hill, and the reason for it is reportedly an imperial order which recognized the Greek clergy as representatives of the island's Greek Christian population.⁸⁴ It is true that the evidence we have suggests that higher clergymen became more directly involved in Ottoman administration and tax-collection in particular. However, the reasons for the end of appeals and declarations of faith must be more complex and remain to be clearly defined.

Conclusion

What we have in seventeenth-century Ottoman Cyprus can be summarised as the interplay between social, economic and political/religious factors at the conjecture of three historical processes: the post-conquest search for a political future of the Venetian elite, the lukewarm imperial (or piratical) aspirations of Catholic states and the counter-reformation and consequent dispatch to the island of Catholic missionaries. The Ottoman conquest, and increasingly the *memory* of the Ottoman conquest, gave rise to a Cypriot version of a phenomenon which was not new: that of itinerant or sedentary peddlers of a narrative of suffering, pleading for redemption from the Ottoman 'yoke'. This local and exported irredentism pandered to the more-or-less serious imperial ambitions of Spain and the Italian city-states. At its most serious, it resulted in a comical attempt at capturing (or pillaging) Famagusta which as we know ended in failure. However, those peddlers of loyalty and allegiance seem to have persevered with their narrative, embellishing it as time went on. This phenomenon can only be interpreted as favour-seeking on the part of Cypriot notables and refugees from the War of Cyprus. The appeals on the one hand and the discussions on the other of a potential campaign to capture Cyprus eventually fizzled out as the seventeenth century wore on. As the Cypriot Greek Orthodox notables and higher clergy became more involved (and identified) with the Ottoman administration, it became increasingly evident that politically and financially their future lay in investing in the island's administration and economy, namely taxation and the production and trade of cash crops such as silk and cotton. We have evidence that the involvement of dragomans and higher clergymen in those administrative and economic processes intensified after the 1640s.⁸⁵ This coincided with a change in the island's administrative status: after the conquest it was invested with the status of the centre of an independent province (*beylerbeyilik*). This was rather relegated after 1640, when the economic conditions could not support the presence of three *paşas* on the island, who were then reduced to one. In 1670, the island became an independent province within the Kapudan Paşa's domains, a move which-according to the eighteenth-century historian

⁸² More on the Greek Orthodox Church in Ottoman Cyprus see: Stavrides, Theocharis, *Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο και Κύπρος: τα Πατριαρχικά έγγραφα των ετών 1600-1878* (Nicosia: Kykkos Research Centre, 2001) (The Oecumenical Patriarchate and Cyprus); Michael, Michalis, *Η Εκκλησία της Κύπρου κατά την οθωμανική περίοδο: Η σταδιακή συγκρότηση ενός θεσμού πολιτικής εξουσίας* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2005) (The Church of Cyprus during the Ottoman period)

⁸³ See Hadjianastasis, "Consolidation", pp. 79-82.

⁸⁴ Kyprianos, *Ιστορία*, pp. 466-467; Hill, *History*, p. 69. There is no further evidence for this.

⁸⁵ See Hadjianastasis, "Bishops".

Kyprianos-gave wider powers to the local Ottoman elite and especially the island's *ağas*.⁸⁶ This development added further impetus to the 'consolidation' of the island's elite and the different power groups within.⁸⁷ This may in turn have led the local Greek Orthodox higher clergy to begin rejecting the pro-Catholic stance of the earlier decades, as we saw in the cases of Kigalas and Mavroudes.

The final conquest of Candia in 1669 may have put the eastern part of the Mediterranean beyond the reach of even the most ambitious Catholic states. This development had undoubtedly created another barrier in the conceptualisation of what was possible in terms of imperial ambition on the part of Spain, but especially the Italian states. The year 1670 becomes a symbolic landmark in that the irredentist, imperialist and confessionalist ambitions which met in Cyprus all come to an end by this date.

The conquest of 1570-71 gave what Arbel and Costantini described as religious syncretism⁸⁸ in sixteenth-century Cyprus a new impetus, as former Catholics became crypto-Catholics and retained offices and places within the island's elite. As the post-conquest pleas and appeals for liberation were perhaps beginning to fade with the passage of time, the seventeenth century aggressive introduction of missionary activity (alongside merchant politics) came as a boost to what by then became a tradition based on pre-existing practice and memory. Cypriot Orthodox higher clergymen continued appealing to Catholic courts not as a direct result of the Ottoman conquest, but perhaps because of the creation of a tradition which expected them to do so. Religious syncretism, irredentism and crypto-Catholicism became elements of instances of political opportunism on the part of those seeking to gain or expand power on an island whose political regime was in a state of flux.

We have seen that the narrative of fixed identities in direct competition or in a relationship of conflict and domination, the staple of nationalist histories, was countered with a new narrative of syncretism, fluidity, symbiosis. It is my position that the latter narrative has been, at its core, based on the same analytical tools as the one it came to challenge. The declarations of faith and allegiance to the Pope and Catholicism undertaken by Greek Orthodox archbishops and bishops still raise eyebrows. That is because the analytical tools at the disposal of historians were deeply influenced by the same modernist understanding of identity as those of nationalist and anti-nationalist historians. Understanding the early modern Mediterranean as a space of fluidity between defined identities is inherently problematic, as it reinforces the same oppositional framework it is attempting to replace. Speaking of symbiosis still suggests that on the ground there was still a clear understanding that symbiosis, syncretism and coexistence were still a departure from what was considered 'normal'. In my view, it is highly debatable whether 'normal' was a fixed state at all. Rather, it was a constantly negotiable and moving set of characteristics, heavily dependent on context.⁸⁹

What is required is a new set of tools, one which allows us to strip away the vestiges of thinking about the pre-modern within the conscious or subconscious confines of the modern. We need to see the Christodouloses and the Kigalases of early modern Mediterranean not as 'interesting', 'confusing' or 'contradictory', but rather as genuine phenomena of societies where boundaries were often nominal, shifting or blurry. Only then can we begin to place these phenomena at their rightful place in the discussion of identity.

⁸⁶ Kyprianos, *Ιστορία*, pp. 460-61. Hadjikyriacou offers great detail on the administrative status of the island; Hadjikyriacou, Antonis, "Society and Economy on an Ottoman Island: Cyprus in the Eighteenth Century", PhD Thesis (London: SOAS, 2011), pp. 122-28.

⁸⁷ Hadjianastasis, "Consolidation", p. 87.

⁸⁸ Constantini, Vera, *Il sultano e l'isola contesa* (Torino, UTET, 2009), p. 98. See also Arbel, Benjamin, "Résistance ou collaboration? Les Chypriotes sous la domination vénitienne", in Balard, Michel (ed.), *Etat et colonisation au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance* (Lyon, 1989), pp. 131-143.

⁸⁹ See Van den Boogert, Maurits, "Ottoman Greeks in the Dutch Levant trade: collective strategy and individual practice (C. 1750-1821)", *Oriente Moderno*, Year 25 (86)-1 (2006), pp. 129-147.

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